

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

412 Cedar Street, P.O. Box 307
Paw Paw, MI 49079

269-657-3762

February
2015

Sunday services at 9:30 am
All are welcome to attend



Greetings!

“Word of mouth” or being referred by a current customer or client has always been the most reliable way for a business or practice to grow. For a while some businesses and practices relied somewhat on Yellow Page ads, newspaper ads and direct mail, but in this 21st century, those methods have little impact compared to Twitter, Facebook and websites. Even e-mail is becoming obsolete especially among the young. But, the number one way to grow is still “word of mouth.”

Those people who are invited or have been recommended come in with a positive attitude and are much more likely to stay. They already “know” someone there and so immediately feel some sense of connection. What people are most hungry for today is a sense of belonging and a sense of connection. There is a deep spiritual hunger and a longing for a sense of purpose. The questions are not new: Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? Is there life beyond death? Why do bad things happen? How can I make any difference in this world? Am I loveable?

Jesus' great commission to us is to go forth and make disciples and teach them to obey everything that Jesus has taught us. Teach them to love God with all their heart, soul and mind and to love our neighbor as Jesus has loved us. Teach them that God loves us. And it is out of that love that we can make the decision to love others. Jesus teaches us to be quick to forgive and slow to condemn. Jesus commands us to feed the poor, clothe the naked, quench the thirst of the thirsty, heal the sick and visit those in prison. Jesus teaches us to side with those on the margins, the very people whom we are quick to despise.

We are to do and teach all the above, but first we have to invite them into a relationship with Jesus. First we have to invite them to come and see.



There will be two opportunities to worship on Ash Wednesday, noon and 7:00 p.m. Invite someone to come with you to experience Ash Wednesday for the first time or to experience it again in an Episcopal Church. No reservations needed.

During Lent, we will be studying *Making Sense of Scripture* by David Lose. He is an ELCA pastor and professor of preaching. *In Making Sense of Scripture, David Lose invites the reader to engage in a conversation, one that he imagines discussing around his kitchen table, about seven major questions of the Bible. More than a standard biblical reference book, Making Sense of Scripture is a dialogue that encourages readers to bring their questions or doubts to the table when reading Scripture. During this conversation, there are different opportunities for the reader to interact with the Bible, ultimately leaving room for personal transformation of the heart and mind.* David Lose writes in an easy style that is not too challenging. We will begin to gather at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays of Lent (February 24-March 24, 2015). We will share a simple supper of home-made soup, bread or crackers and salad. We will eat and discuss the book. This is yet another opportunity to invite someone to come and see.

We are all under the command of Jesus to make disciples and teach them to obey him. We begin by an invitation to come and see.

Blessings,
Rebecca+

GIVING IS GREAT. Giving smart is better

Traditionally, those of us who give to food banks will clean out our cabinets and drop off the rejects. As a formerly homeless person, I'd like to ask you to try something different this year: Give like a hungry person. If all your meals for the next week were coming from a donation box, what would you put in there? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Don't give outlandish things. I once received a tub of candied fruitcake fruit from a food bank. When I ran out of everything else and ate some, I thought, I am so poor. I've been reduced to eating other people's rejects. Some food is just to horrible to wish on anyone else; throw it out instead.
2. Do give no-cook foods. When I was homeless, I didn't carry my microwave around. Others have a hard time cooking if their landlord won't fix the broken stove or if the power company shut off the electricity. So give granola bars, crackers, Spam, tuna, peanut butter, dry milk — anything you'd take on a long hike.
3. Leave food in the original packaging. If it needs to be portioned out, volunteers at the food bank will take care of it.
4. Think Simple. A boxed cake that says just add water is better than one that requires milk, eggs, vegetable oil and whatever else. Instant coffee is great; ground coffee less so. Also good are multi-taskers — Bisquick rocks.
5. Label special dietary needs. People with food allergies or celiac disease often can't find donated food they can eat. If you donate gluten-free food, mark it Gluten-Free in large print. Do the same for allergen-free items. Clear labeling will help get the right food to the right clients.
6. Make it easy to open. Aseptic — or sterile — packaging and pouches are better than pull-top cans, which are better than traditional cans. It sucks even more than usual to be hungry if you've got a perfectly good can of food and no way to get the thing open. And avoid glass jars — they break too easily.
7. Ask what's needed. The food bank may want non-food items, like soap, toilet paper, tampons and pads, diapers and pet food, because these can't be purchased with food stamps. I never would have guessed the food bank near my house needs plastic bags.
8. Check your grocery store. Many stores work with local food pantries to assemble bags of food you can buy and donate for five or ten bucks. It's an easy way to give.
9. Be nice. I still remember how finding cookies in my bag could make me happy all day. When you're poor, small things take on more significance. Try to include at least one item you'd choose as a treat for your kids. Someone else's kids will love you.
10. Consider donating cash. Large organizations can get much better deals on food than you can. With \$10, Feeding America (feedingamerica.org) can provide 90 meals to hungry people.

Of course, the important thing is to do what you can. Giving food to hungry people is awesome., and I love you for it no matter what you donate (unless it's candied fruitcake fruit 😊)

**THANKS TO
JEANIE KRACKER
FOR BRINGING THIS TIMELY
ARTICLE TO MY ATTENTION
Ed.**

About Lent Madness

Lent Madness began in 2010 as the brain-child of the Rev. [Tim Schenck](#). In seeking a fun, engaging way for people to learn about the men and women comprising the Church's Calendar of Saints, Tim came up with this unique Lenten devotion. Combining his love of sports with his passion for the lives of the saints, Lent Madness was born on his blog "[Clergy Family Confidential](#)" which has subsequently moved locations and become the more stream-lined "[Clergy Confidential](#)."

The format is straightforward: 32 saints are placed into a tournament-like single elimination bracket. Each pairing remains open for a set period of time and people vote for their favorite saint. 16 saints make it to the Round of the Saintly Sixteen; eight advance to the Round of the Elate Eight; four make it to the Faithful Four; two to the Championship; and the winner is awarded the coveted Golden Halo. The first round consists of basic biographical information about each of the 32 saints. Things get a bit more interesting in the subsequent rounds as we offer quotes and quirks, and explore legends.

The major change from 2010 to 2011 was the introduction of four "celebrity bloggers" to champion particular saints through the Final Four. In 2012 we partnered with [Forward Movement](#) and Executive Director Scott Gunn to create our own website and broaden the number of people involved in the writing process, with Tim and Scott serving as the self-appointed Supreme Executive Committee.

Along the way we've added more celebrity bloggers, a poster-sized bracket, weekly Monday Madness videos, and the *Saintly Scorecard*, an annual publication containing all 32 first round bios, information about how to participate in Lent Madness as a congregation, and an essential Vocabulary List to decipher

Articles and spots about Lent Madness have appeared in the *Washington Post*, NPR, Huffington Post, FOXNews, NBC, and even *Sports Illustrated*.

As Lent Madness continues to grow and evolve, what won't change is the essence of Lent Madness: allowing people to get to know some amazing people who have come before us in the faith and reminding one another that there's no reason for a dreary Lenten discipline. If this helps people connect with the risen Christ during this season of penitence and renewal, and have a bit of fun in the process, then it continues to be worthwhile. We hope you'll participate fully this Lent and vote with reckless abandon!

Brackets are available at church. Go to www.lentmadness.org for more information. Judy Peterson can answer your questions.

PATH WORKSHOP OFFERED

PATH (Personal Action Towards Health) is a six week program that teaches practical skills for living a healthy life with a chronic health condition like diabetes, arthritis, asthma, chronic pain, heart disease, etc... The workshop focuses on self-care, learning new coping strategies, and sharing personal experiences with other group members. There is no charge for this workshop which will be held at St. Mark's.

Classes are scheduled to meet at St. Mark's Episcopal Church 412 Cedar Street in Paw Paw on Thursdays from 10:30am-1:00 pm and will begin March 19th-April 23rd. Classes meet for 2 1/2 hours once a week. A light snack will be provided.

Cost for the 6 week workshop is FREE, but donations are gratefully accepted. Family members, friends or caregivers are also encouraged to attend. Class sizes are limited and pre-registration is required. Please call Tracy at (800) 442-2803 at the Region IV Area Agency on Aging for more information and to register for the



THE PICTURE PAGE



Pictures above were from the recent Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper. Our thanks to the men's group who hosted the event and to Jeanie Kracker who took the pictures.

Phyllis and Jim took a bus trip to Branson Missouri with an overnight stop in St. Louis. At left, Phyllis points to the Gate-